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gods of the *ptso*; but the greater number of lamas feel no metaphysical qualms and bear their full share in this Mun ceremony. The *ptso* supernaturals are always invoked by the Mun when they perform a ceremony for the benefit of a particular individual. In the Mun theogony all the *ptso* supernaturals are friendly and there is no rivalry between the groups; it is thought that the more populous the *ptso* the stronger the guardian supernaturals.

The *ptso* supernaturals descend, as it were, from father to son; women have other different supernaturals which descend from mother to daughter; with the consequence that brothers and sisters have different guardian supernaturals, although all children are counted as members of their father's *ptso*. (An exception must be made in the case of unacknowledged bastards, who are considered to be members of the *ptso* of their mother's father.) These women's supernaturals are invoked, along with numberless others, at the Mun ceremonies after sowing and harvesting, and special sacrifices are made in their intention in the case of illness. Special sacrifices are also made to them at the time of the marriage feast, and the questioning of the bride about her special supernaturals is one of the most formalised incidents in the marriage ceremonies. There are certain other supernaturals which are common to all women; these include Ami *rum*, the god of riches, and Katong Fi who visits women in their dreams and copulates with them at the time of their menses; this dream-copulation is meant to continue throughout life, and should a month pass without this dream it means that the woman is shortly going to die. Parallel to these exclusively female supernaturals are Pong *rum*, and his wife Shing *rum*, the patrons of hunting, who are worshipped exclusively by men. There are also other supernaturals who are as it were patrons of each sex respectively, and yet others who belong to the family, as distinct from the *ptso*. Among the countless supernaturals with which the world is filled these personal and private ones have no great significance; along with numberless others—the enumeration of gods in a Mun sacrifice may take two or three hours—they are prayed to for the blessings of long life, many children, and prosperity, but their power is not considered to be great.

Except as an exogamic classification the *ptso* is now functionless. Although members of the different *ptso* are scattered, not only throughout Zongu, but wherever Lepchas live, the triennial unions only gather those members who live near one another; to the best of my knowledge there has never been, nor has there ever

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848 It occasionally happens that a woman becomes pregnant before she is *asék*'d, or when either the youth or the absence of her husband renders legitimate paternity impossible. These accidents are considered deplorable, but the effect is very different according to whether the woman is married or not; if she is married the bastardy is a private affair; if she is not it threatens the whole community with a storm of hail which will destroy the harvest. The danger of these illegitimate pregnancies apparently only arise in the later stages;[14] grown men, especially widowers, often impregnate their future wives and only perform *asék* in the third month of pregnancy (under these circumstances parents will usually give their daughters to widowers) and they do not have to perform the ceremony of *thip-song* which is required for bastards. It also happens very occasionally that a boy and girl will present their elders with a *fait accompli* through the girl's pregnancy; this also does not involve the ceremony.

The *thip-song* ceremony which has to be performed for illegally pregnant women is costly and elaborate. An ox, or, failing that, two pigs have to be sacrificed by a Mun, and a long and involved ceremony performed by the lamas. This ceremony should properly last two days, and all the village should be feasted, to recompense them for their harvest which the hail would spoil. If the father of the child is unmarried, and wishes to marry the girl, he pays for this ceremony, after which the *asék* is performed in the normal manner. If for any reason he cannot or will not marry the girl his group should offer a substitute husband. Should the father be a married man this paternity is a cause of considerable scandal; all his family group, as well as his wife's, will turn against him and upbraid him publicly; they may even shame him by paying for the *thip-song* ceremony to be performed. It is possible however that his first wife may be agreeable to his *asék*-ing the girl and taking her as his second wife.

If a man acknowledges his paternity but refuses to marry the girl or provide an alternative husband for her the girl's family will pay for the *thip-song* ceremony, in which case the father will have no claim on the child; he will be obliged however to present the

[14] There is, as far as I know, no formulated rule on the subject; but it seems probable that, on the analogy of the pre-natal precautions which only have to be observed in the second five moons of pregnancy, it is only when the bastard is fully formed, at the end of five moons, that it becomes socially dangerous.

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girl's parents with Rs. 15 and a pig as 'soup money'; these gifts represent the price of the soup given as special food to nursing mothers. Should he want the child and not its mother he must pay for both the *thip-song* and the 'soup money'. If the father is unknown or refuses to acknowledge his responsibility the girl's family performs the ceremony; at the end of the ceremony a tree is designated as the child's father; a wooden phallus is stuck into the trunk and it is then spat on and otherwise insulted by all present. The tree is meant to wither after the child's birth.

It is a very great disgrace for a girl to produce a bastard, and it is believed that possibly some girls somewhere bear their bastards in field-houses or the forest and kill them rather than confess to the act. I could get no concrete instances of this and the idea of infanticide is so appalling to Lepchas that they will not even willingly entertain the idea of its being practised by strangers. There is no known method of avoiding conception and the only abortifacient believed in, and that very half-heartedly, is the bathing in hot sulphurous streams which are found some distance away in Zongu.

When a bastard is born there is no gathering of friends and relations for the birth feast on the third day and a lama will not come to the house to cast the child's horoscope; instead either the child's or the girl's father must visit him. Apart from this the child is treated normally. Should the girl marry later the child will stay with its maternal grandparents and will be brought up as their child; it will be considered as a member of their *ptso*, and, if a boy, will have the same share in the heritable property as his maternal uncles. Although bearing a bastard is an act of the greatest shame, once it is over and done with no attempt is made to hide the matter or to hush it up. People will announce quite openly that they or their relations are bastards, or have born or begotten bastards; the shame situation has been successfully passed and is therefore no longer a cause for unpleasant feelings. Bastards are believed to suffer from one of three inherent weaknesses; either their mothers will die young, or their health will be bad, or they will suffer from goitre (three of the six supposed bastards of Lingthem have this complaint). Goitres are of two sorts; one of them is extremely lucky and productive of wealth and prosperity;[18]

[18] The seven men of Mayel (see Chapter Nine) who are the patrons of grain harvests are all said to have enormous goitres and as people sow the grain they murmur in prayer to them '*Ta-yoot thimbu : sambo thimbu*'—'May we have big goitres; may we have big harvests.'

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the other is the *tamtoom* of bastardy. It is possible to diagnose bastardy goitres because these will ache in the presence of corpses or in the houses where bastards have been born.

There are six reputed bastards in Lingthem, but only two of these were born from unmarried mothers, and for only one of them, the old mother of Pargeut, did the father perform *thip-song*. The first Dorjé Lapoon is said to be the son of a travelling Sikkimese; he was born during his father's prolonged absence. Lumba *chith-embu* is believed to be the bastard of a lama of Talung on the ground that they look exactly like one another, and Dunbi, for the same reason, is said to be the son of his father's 'younger brother'. In the face of strong physical resemblance with a possible father, it is generally believed that this man, rather than the husband, was the begettor. Nahyeun is generally believed to be Dunbi's bastard; he was born of an unmarried girl when his father was already married. Little Seryop Katoo who was born when his mother's husband was twelve has already been mentioned; his begettor is said to be Jiroong's elder brother. In her time Kurma's mother bore two bastards, one before her marriage, and one when she was a widow. There are cases in which a man believes himself to be the father of another man's child; but these suspicions are always kept very quiet.

The production of a bastard is no draw-back on the girl's subsequent marriage; on the contrary, the fact that she has shown herself fertile makes her if anything more desirable. The Lepchas have a great and justifiable fear of sterility; they do not on the other hand manifest or express any fear of impotence, and no aphrodisiacs are employed. One or two extremely peculiar and incongruous ones are known of, for they are hawked about in Gangtok and other towns where there is a ready market for them among the Hindus, and, somewhat less, among the Nepali. For the Lepchas these are extremely funny; they cannot conceive of the loss of potency, any more than the loss of appetite, except through illness or old age.

There is an altogether surprising amount of sterility among the Lepcha women of Zongu.[16] Of the fifty-six married women over twenty, eighteen were completely sterile and one had only produced a still-born daughter. Of these seven had reached or passed the menopause without producing any children; four are between

[16] For the complete fertility tables of the women of Lingthem, and also for complete life tables see Appendix I, a.

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159 But even this proved useless; the Dorjé Lapoon was uncontrollable and without shame (for a lama should respect the wives of lamas of a lower grade than himself as though they were daughters-in-law) and so eventually Jiroong capitulated and gave his wife to the Dorjé Lapoon, who thereupon moved into his (Jiroong's) house. This transaction was completely irregular; Jiroong treated the Dorjé Lapoon as if he were his younger brother. After he had given up his wife and home to the Dorjé Lapoon Jiroong travelled around for some years, returning home from time to time; during his absence the two old people worked the fields. When Jiroong married his second wife (Tempa's sister) the two of them shared house with the Dorjé Lapoon and the Omzet nun. In 1934 the house burned down; the two couples then separated; Jiroong and his family continued living in the burned house while the Dorjé Lapoon and his wife went to live in a field-house a little higher up the mountain.

Six months after this move the Omzet nun died, and Atyok's son came to look after his aged father. This aged father was in 1937 trying to arrange a betrothal with the widowed younger sister of his fourth wife Atyok; but she refused to accept, considering that a man forty years older than herself would scarcely make an adequate husband.

159 The validating feasts by which the Dorjé Lapoon attained his high rank among the lamas were paid for by Datoop. Dorjé Lapoon, Chudo said, are appointed for their age and for their learning; the suggestion is that they have taught the lower lamas who will therefore honour them as teachers. Their moral character is not regarded. The first Dorjé Lapoon is the only man in the district who possesses or can read a Lepcha manuscript; the book he owns is a translation of the Tibetan scripture Guru Chong Numtar.

159 Datoop surprised me one day by announcing quite spontaneously that his father was a bastard—a word with very considerable shameful connotations. He said that he was half Sikkimese, as his mother had betrayed his absent father with a wandering Sikkimese monk. He was however treated as legitimate and is a member of his mother's husband's *piso*.

Datoop.

Datoop has few memories of his early childhood. He can recall being beaten by his parents, but not being carried. After his

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was married off to another man, but the Dorje-Lopön was made to refund the original marriage price. He was, however, given the custody of his son Datoop, now a man of fifty, and one of the leading lights in the Lingtem monastery. As a child Datoop lived sometimes with his father and sometimes with his mother, who had now married the headman of a nearby village. It seemed as though the Dorje-Lopön would now settle down to respectable married life; but in the course of his wanderings he one day discovered an attractive young girl in a neighbouring village. Chapshay was her name, and almost at once he deserted his wife and went to live at the home of his new friend's parents, only coming to Lingtem for the purpose of attending periodical ceremonies at the monastery. After a time Chapshay's parents tired of the situation and suggested that the Dorje-Lopön might at least regularise his position. To this he consented; and accordingly presented them with the necessary carcass of a pig. While he was still living with Chapshay he one day espied her niece, with whom he instantly fell in love. It was a mere matter of months for him to make Atyok pregnant; and when this occurred her parents forced him to do the ceremony known as *Tip-song*, in order that she should not give birth to a bastard. This was followed by marriage. For some time the three lived together at Chapshay's home, the Dorje-Lopön still coming to Lingtem from time to time. In those days, before the present building had been erected, the main door of the monastery faced towards the east. There was but one big prayer-drum, and it was housed in a separate little building known as the *Hla-gong*. Living in Lingtem at the time was one Jiroong, whose wife, a woman much older than he, was also an Inebu. She had already been married before going to live with Jiroong, but her former husband and all his near relations were dead. She was not attractive; but since Jiroong's parents were too poor to obtain a better wife for him he was forced to submit. Jiroong's wife was in charge of the *Hla-gong*, which meant that she was often about in the monastery; and in those days

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After the Lama had gone away the uncle put the corpse into a basket. When Karma saw this he cried out and asked what had happened to his father. He tried to get into the basket with him, but his mother pulled him away: "It is no longer your father," she said, "he has now turned into a Mung."

The following morning Karma's uncle again came to the house, and took up some of the floor-boards. Many people now gathered at the house. One man took a burning fire-brand and got down through the hole which had been made in the floor. His uncle followed and others dragged the basket containing the corpse towards the hole. It was lowered to the ground and then the uncle hoisted it on to his shoulders and carried it away. Other people followed, some carrying the deceased's bow and arrows, and also his bamboo arrow-holder. Now they all moved off, one man walking in front with the lighted brand. Later on the party returned to the house and Karma wondered why his father was no longer with them. When they were approaching a big fire was lighted on the path outside, over which they all passed. Then a knife was brought and placed upon the door-step by Karma's uncle. Everybody stepped over this before entering the house. Later on they all went away and the house was very quiet. Karma wondered why his mother cried so much.

Karma's parents were always very poor; they did not own even a single goat or cow. He remembers his uncle once bringing a goat to the house, but cannot remember it being slaughtered. It was very good to see the meat, and he hoped he would be given some to eat. But his mother told him not to touch it, and this made him feel very angry. After her husband's death, Karma's mother gave birth to two more children. One was born three months later; but the other was a bastard. Its father was a man named Takor; but he denied paternity and refused to accept any responsibility in the matter. He behaved in the same way with another woman, by whom also he had a child. Some months after his father's death Karma was playing outside the house when a

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159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having "running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama, who thought that if there were any more children they would claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
● [848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own biological father. He appears to have been a man of

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its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals. It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its

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the following are examples: *Ka-ka*, or *Ma-ma*—Don't; *A-ji*—Take care!; *Bum*—stay there.

Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks mentions that "deformed children are instantly killed, the mother in a case of that sort being well treated by her husband but badly by her neighbours." But my information does not in any way confirm this wild generalisation. All my informants were horrified at the suggestion that Lepchas practised any form of infanticide. "Such a thing is never done," said Tafoor, "nor have I ever heard of it. Even a monster, such as might be the result of two near relatives marrying, would not be killed. The only case of this sort of which I have ever heard was when, many generations ago, a cow in Talung gave birth to a human child. The people were very frightened and killed it after a week."

In a community which desires children above all things, and in which no stigma attaches to illegitimacy, there would appear to be no reason for indulging in infanticide, and I am convinced that in Jongu it is absolutely unknown. In fairness to Mrs. Stocks, however (whose account is admittedly compiled from odds and ends of information gathered from all over the place), I should add that Miss Scott told me that amongst her Christian Lepcha community she notices a marked tendency for illegitimate children not to survive more than a very few months. If, however, this is due (as I imagine to be the case) to some form of infanticide—slow starvation, for instance, or general lack of care—it is one of the more unsatisfactory results of Mission influence, since members of the Church who give birth to illegitimate children are not looked upon with favour. Missionaries do a great deal of admirable work, but it is a great pity that the Church cannot see its way to compromise in the matters of polygyny and illegitimacy.

Contraception is not known amongst the Lepchas; nor does a woman take any action to induce a miscarriage when she knows that she is about to give birth to an illegitimate child: but in such circumstances should she miscarry she will

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say nothing about it. I have already stated that no stigma attaches to an illegitimate child as such; but when a woman, in the words of one of our interpreters, "goes in for bastarding" it is necessary for the man concerned to perform a ceremony known as *Tip-song*. It should be done as soon as it is known that the girl is pregnant and consists in sacrificing an ox or pig, which, together with an assortment of various kinds of grain, is offered to the birth-god by a Mun. There is also a small Lama ceremony, for which, however, only one small *torma* is needed. For very rich people the ceremony and its attendant festivities may last as long as two whole days, during which time the offerings are consumed by the assembled company.

It sometimes happens that a man refuses to do *Tip-song*, in which case the girl's parents will themselves make arrangements to carry it out; but the man will eventually be made to pay fifteen rupees and a pig. This payment is known as *Soo*, which is the word used also for the special food provided for a woman at the time of her confinement. *Tip-song* is often, but not necessarily, followed by formal betrothal and marriage, but if the man refuses to carry it out he has no claim on the child. Once the Tip-song gifts have been given the man acknowledges the child as his own and is responsible for its upbringing. He has, however, no claim on the mother unless he follows the *Tip-song* up with betrothal and marriage. Karma's mother gave birth to an illegitimate child after the death of her husband. But since the father denied paternity and refused to accept any responsibility in the matter, the *Tip-song* was provided by her relations.

It should be noted that the purpose of the ceremony and its attendant gifts is not to legitimise the child's position in the community but to avert the damage to the crops of the girl's whole village by hail, which would otherwise ensue.

In cases where a girl gives birth to an illegitimate child by a man who is already married, his wife's consent is first necessary before he can do *Tip-song*. If she refuses her

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If she refuses her consent he gives merely the *Soo* payment, and the matter is closed: but if she is willing, as seems to be commonly the case, he may take the girl into his home as an additional wife. 848 595

No stigma attaches to the mother of a bastard and she is able to contract a normal marriage in due course. In view of the fact that so many women in Jongu are sterile, she may even be sought after and may get a richer husband than would otherwise have been the case; but the child will generally be left with its mother's parents. 848 [842]

When an illegitimate child is born its father will go secretly to a Lama to find out what its name is to be; but if the father refuses to acknowledge it, then the mother's father will make the necessary visit, since a Lama will not himself go to a house for the purpose of naming an illegitimate child. Apart from this minor matter, the usual third-day festivities will be carried out exactly as for a child born in wedlock. [553]

When a father refuses to acknowledge paternity a small ceremony is carried out before the child is born. A tree is pointed out as representing the child's father, and a small bamboo sliver, meant to represent his penis, is stuck into the base of it. This is then spat upon in a contemptuous fashion, after which the tree is addressed in an insulting voice and told that it is the father of the child. It is thought that when the child is born the tree will wither.

One curious case in connection with illegitimacy may be mentioned in passing. There is in Lingtem a certain family of which several members have died of leprosy. The nephew of the present head of the family, whose father died of this disease, is said by his uncle to be a bastard. This, however, is thought by the rest of the village to be a pure fiction, and it is said that he has made the boy an "honorary" bastard, so to speak, to clear him from the herditary taint of leprosy. This will do away with the difficulty, which might otherwise ensue, of finding him a wife, when the time comes for him to marry. [753]

Most people seem to think that it is desirable for the first- 842

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584 sexual experience; or in a case where a particularly shy boy is being betrothed to some girl with whom he was previously unacquainted.

At the end of the ten days the boy returns to his own home; but he is now at liberty to visit the girl whenever he wishes. He usually goes to stay with her from time to time, and also brings her to his own home whenever it is convenient. This gradual weaning of the girl from her parents seems to me an admirable arrangement, for when the time comes for her to leave home finally there is no psychological wrench: she has already been able to adjust herself gradually to the new state of affairs. Even after marriage it is usual for a girl to go back to her parents from time to time, so that unless she has married into a very distant village she is at no time completely cut off from them.

There are no ceremonies intervening between betrothal and marriage, and the interval between the two is entirely dependent upon the wealth of the bridegroom's family. Provided that money and food are available for the necessary feasts the marriage can take place on the first auspicious day after betrothal: on the other hand it may be deferred for years if necessary; and may even never take place at all. [848] Once the pair have been formally betrothed there is no objection to their having children, since such are considered to be in every respect legitimate.

585 The actual day for the marriage is determined by a Lama, and a few days previously the boy escorts the girl back to her own home, should she happen not to be living there at the time. On the day before the wedding the bridegroom, together with his attendants, sets out to bring the bride to his own home, the whole party being known as *Nyom le-bu*. In addition to the bridegroom himself, it consists of his *Pi-bo*, one or other of his paternal uncles, and a boy friend known as *Myok tyol*, who is a sort of best man. They take with them one leg of pork and one rupee and six annas in cash. The six annas is known as *Sarong chut*. If this is not paid the women of the girl's household will rush out and attack the men with